

North Carolina Industrial Commission

January 26, 2015

New Slate of Deputy Commissioners Appointed

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Raleigh, N.C. - North Carolina Industrial Commission Chairman Andrew T. Heath has announced the appointment of seven deputy commissioners. Chairman Heath has appointed Lori W. Gaines, Melanie Wade Goodwin, Sumit Gupta, Robert Harris, Christopher Loutit, William "Bill" Shipley and Michael Silver. All appointments are for six-year terms. Deputy commissioners function as the Industrial Commission's trial-level judges and hold hearings in contested workers' compensation cases, state tort claims, and other matters.

"I am pleased to appoint these qualified individuals to serve as deputy commissioners," said Chairman Heath. "Their past experiences and legal qualifications will prove beneficial to the Industrial Commission as well as to the state's workers and businesses."

Lori W. Gaines is currently in private practice with the Lea Schultz Law Firm in Wilmington. Gaines has more than 15 years of legal experience including workers' compensation, criminal defense and family law matters. Gaines' previous experience includes handling workers' compensation issues for the North Carolina Department of Public Safety and serving as the Family Court Administrator in Wilmington. She is a past president of the New Hanover County Bar Association and was appointed to the Commission on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention by former Chief Justice I. Beverly Lake. Gaines is a graduate of both the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and Campbell University School of Law.

Melanie Wade Goodwin has served as a deputy commissioner since July 2011. Goodwin is a graduate of the University of North Carolina. Prior to attending law school at Campbell University, she worked as an advocate with the North Carolina Council for Women. Goodwin then practiced family law in Richmond County for almost 10 years. Between 2004 and 2010, she served three terms in the North Carolina House of Representatives representing Richmond and Montgomery counties.

Sumit Gupta has served as a deputy commissioner since October 2014. He previously served as the Industrial Commission's General Counsel. Before joining the Industrial Commission, he was a partner at the law firm of Stewart, Schmidlin, Bullock & Gupta in Smithfield where he practiced criminal law and general civil litigation. From 2008 to 2012, Gupta served as an Assistant District Attorney in North Carolina's 11th District where he prosecuted cases in Johnston, Harnett, and Lee counties. Gupta grew up in Smithfield and is a graduate of Smithfield-Selma High School. He received his B.A. from the University of North Carolina and earned his J.D. and MBA degrees from Wake Forest University.

Robert J. Harris has served as a deputy commissioner since 2005. Prior to attending law school, he worked as a newspaper reporter in Johnston County for nearly two years. After receiving his law degree, Harris worked in private practice before joining the Industrial Commission as a Special Deputy Commissioner in 2003. Harris is a graduate of Yale University and the University of North Carolina School of Law.

Christopher C. Loutit was sworn in as Chief Deputy Commissioner in January 2014. He previously served as the Industrial Commission's Administrator. Before joining the Industrial Commission in June 2013, Loutit was a partner at the Wilmington law firm of Johnson, Lambeth & Brown, where he represented both plaintiffs and defendants. Prior to attending law school, he began his career as a Corporate Finance Analyst with UBS in New York City. Loutit grew up in Wilmington and is a graduate of The Lawrenceville School, Trinity College, and the American University Washington College of Law.

William "Bill" Shipley currently practices workers' compensation law with the firm of Willson Jones Carter & Baxley, P.A in Columbia, South Carolina. From 2008 to 2012, he was a prosecutor for the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit Solicitor's Office in South Carolina. After graduating law school, Shipley clerked for United States District Court Judges N. Carlton Tilley, Jr. and James A. Beaty, Jr. A Winston-Salem native, he graduated from R.J. Reynolds High School, Wofford College and the University of South Carolina Law School. Shipley is admitted to practice law in North Carolina and South Carolina.

Michael Silver currently serves as an Assistant District Attorney in Forsyth County where he has been the lead prosecutor in over 45 felony trials ranging from drug offenses to homicides. Silver was appointed to serve on the Domestic Violence Commission and the Forsyth County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. He also teaches several law-related classes at Forsyth Technical Community College. He has been named "Most Likely to Leave Major Footprints in the City" by the Winston-Salem Journal and is active with the Big Brothers, Big Sisters program. Silver is a graduate of North Carolina A&T State University and the North Carolina Central University School of Law.

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